



Dr. Laurie Malia  
Primary Care Center at Connecticut Children's Medical Center  
76 New Britain Ave, CT 06106  
(860) 837-6800



Testimony of Laurie Malia of the Primary Care Center at Connecticut Children's Medical Center  
**IN SUPPORT OF SB 209,**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE REACH OUT AND READ PROGRAM**  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly's Committee on Children  
February 5, 2015

Good afternoon, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and members of the Committee on Children,

I am a pediatric resident at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. I am contacting you as a pediatric resident and advocate for children to lend my support to **Senate Bill 209, An Act Concerning Funding for the Reach Out and Read Program.**

As a pediatrician, I am especially passionate about early childhood education. The Reach Out and Read program is essential to our children, as much of the population we serve are underprivileged and live below the poverty line. Books unfortunately fall low on these parents purchase list. Our ability to give books to children in our clinic helps to stimulate conversation among parents about the importance of reading aloud to their child. With a book in hand at the child's checkup, we as pediatricians can show parents how to read and interact with their child, from simply reading the words to pointing out pictures and colors.

In my short time in practice I have already seen the impact Reach Out and Read has on families. One little girl that is now three years old has a small collection of books starting from when she was just six months old. She now asks for a book at each well child visit to add to her collection. Her mother commented at her last visit how grateful she was to have these books to read to her daughter as they have now made story time part of her bedtime ritual. This is exactly what we are striving for families to do – embrace their children, spend time with them and teach them to love to read!

Reach Out and Read strives to prepare children for school helping them to read, learn and ultimately do well in school. A large number of children especially from underprivileged households are not read to from birth and sadly many will struggle early on in school. Children exposed to Reach Out and Read have been found to perform better than children not exposed to Reach Out and Read on vocabulary tests.

The Reach Out and Read program is truly essential to all communities. Parents, especially those in underprivileged communities desire guidance about reading with their children and they

need quality children's books. Reach Out and Read provides this need and narrows the gap especially for underprivileged families. **Please support Senate Bill 209, An Act Concerning Funding for the Reach Out and Read Program.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Laurie Malia